

THE
BEHAVIOUR
OF
John Hutchins,
IN
NEWGATE,

Together with his

Dying Words

As he was going to be

EXECUTED in FLEET-STREET,

On Wednesday the 17th. of December, 1684.

FOR

Murdering of *John Sparks* a Waterman, near Serjeants-Inn London,
on Wednesday the 3d. of December,

AT the late Sessions of Gaol-Delivery, Held in the Old-Bayly, the 10th 11th 12th and 13th. Days of December. Amongst 18 others that recieved sentence of Death: One of the Persons of whom we now give a more particular Account is *John Hutchins*, who was Indicted for the Murder of *John Sparks*, a Waterman in Fleet-street, on the 3d. of December. It appeared on his Tryal that *Sparks* with two of his Companions coming from a place where they had been about Business, met with the said *Hutchins*, who was in Company with two Women, one of whom *Sparks* in way of jest strook on the Belly, at which *Hutchins* was so far Enraged, that he run the Deceased party through the Thigh, of which Wound he instantly Died: Upon which the same being proved against him, he was found Guilty.

After his Condemnation the said *John Hutchins*, On Monday the 15th. of this Instant December, 1684. Confessed freely of himself, he had been a great Sinner in many Respects, But that he was not Guilty of the Murder for which he stands Condemned. The Ordinary replied, that he did not believe his Denyal of the Crime to be True, because it was proved upon him by several Witnesses, who being upon their Oath, Credit is to be given to them; in as much as Perjury is so Heinous and Soul hardning a Sin, that Repentance for it is very Difficult, and therefore it Hazards the Eternal Happiness of the Soul.

Hutchins replied, that tho he could not be Credited in his purging of himself as to the Murder, yet he had many ways greatly provoked Gods Anger against him. Upon this free inclination to a Confession in the General, the Ordinary assured him that he added a deeper Malignity to all his other Sins, if he stood out in the denial of the Murder, and yet was conscious in the least of it. Yet he still denied it, tho he was urged to deal Ingenuously and sincerely, as a Dying Man, whose Repentance would be much hindred and questioned as to the Truth of it, if he proceeded to Extenuate, much more to deny the Fact. So when the Ordinary for that present could not prevail to bring him to an Acknowledgement in that Respect, he proceeded to enquire into his Education, Trade, and manner of his former Conversation. He said that he was Born in a place called *Abbot-Sally*, six Miles from *Taunton* in *Somersetshire*, Descended of Parents who lived in Reputation, and of a plentiful Estate; that he was the Eldest Son, but being Extravagant in his Conversation, he much Diminished that Estate which was left him; that he was so Profuse, that having wasted most or all of it, he was forced to betake himself to the condition of a Souldier; That he Lifted himself under *Sir George Booth*, when he appeared in Publick Service, for the Asserting of his Loyalty to the King; That afterward he betook himself to some other Imployment, but soon quitted it, And then fall-

ing into bad Acquaintance, he grew negligent of his Duty to God, and by degrees very Intemperate: That he also was addicted to Lying and Swearing; that he seldom Prayed to be kept free from the Temptations of *Satan*, and the Lusts of his own Heart; that he had often Profaned the *Sabbath Day*, and by his Excess had deeply run himself into Debt, upon this he was cast a Prisoner into the *Marshalsea*, where he continued for a long time, and was relieved by the Charity of several Worthy Persons, yet mispent that which was given to him; that he had a great fit of Sickness, out of which if he Recovered, he Vowed to God that he would Reform his Loose Conversation: Yet contrary to his Resolution, he continued very Vain and Regardless of answering the Goodness of God, in restoring him to his Health. This he said lay as an heavy Burthen on his Conscience, by calling to mind that Counsel and Charge of our Blessed *Saviour* to the impotent Man, who had lain at the Pool of *Bethesda* 38 Years Jo. 5. 14. *Behold thou art made Whole, Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.*

He also said, that he Believed that for sinning against the clear and strong Convictions of his Conscience, God left him to run into further Wickedness; and that the Sentence of Death justly overtook him, because within a few Days before he was Apprehended for the Murder, he lay under this horrid Imprecation on himself, *that the Vengeance of God might light upon him, if he did not forbear to go into the Company of a Person with whom he was at Variance.* Yet he did Associate after with that very Person.

On *Tuesday*, the 16th of this Instant Mr. *Ordinary*, took the said *Hutchins* apart from the rest of the Condemned Prisoners and after Counsel and Prayer almost Two hours with him; He then Inquired into the frame of *Hutchins*'s Heart, how he stood prepared for his Execution on the morrow, being *Wednesday* and what hope he had of a future Happy State. He answered only in Generalities and loose uncertain hopes. The *Ordinary* told him, that It was no wonder he was doubtful of his Salvation, whereas he did not perform the conditional requisite preparations for it: For God in sacred Scripture affirms, that he who endeavours to hide extenuate or deny any Sin shall not prosper, but rather draw the severity of Divine Justice on himself. The *Ordinary* entreated him to be open and free in the confession of all his Sins, but especially of the Murder he is Condemned for; he still after many urgent arguments, to move him to do it stood out in the denial of it; the *Ordinary* layd before him the clear Evidence of his Guiltyness as it was Traversed at his publick Tryal yet he denied the Crime. The *Ordinary* Prayed for him in Particular that the Lord the Omniscent Searcher of every Heart would Incline him, no longer to Dally with God, nor to presume to deceive such, who deal with him about his Eternal State. After time spent with him to

no purpose, as to Confessing his Crime, and yet desiring credit to be given to his denial of it, the *Ordinary* acquainted of him two very sad and dangerous Instances, in one *Gowre* and one *Kirk* who several times with an Horrid Imprecation, denied the Murder of their Wives. Nay *Gowre* after an houre and an halfe absolutely denied the Murder of his Wife tho much perswasion and Prayers were used to move him to an Ingenuous Confession, yet still he denied it, till the *Ordinary* went out of the Cart and then being on the brink of Eternity, he durst not venture into the other World with a flat Falsity in his mouth. So, calling for the *Ordinary* back again, *Gowre* at last Confessed that he Killed his Wife with his own hand. This Horrid Instance of a dissembling and hardened Heart at the very approach of death, the *Ordinary* spread before *Hutchins*, to Convince him of the Diabolical artifices of Sinners to palliate the Crimes with a Soul ruining denial of them: yet *Hutchins* persisted as before in denying, that he was Guilty of the Murder of the *Waterman*.

Upon this, God by a very sensible providence moved the Heart of the Reverend D. *Strillingfleet* Dean of *St. Pauls*, to take very great paynes in perswading *Hutchins* to Confess the whole truth Concerning his Crime. The *Ordinary* is obliged to the Dean for his great patheticall Assistance, yet could he not prevail with *Hutchins* to Confess the Crime. So he left him, and in a pious Compassion of his Stubbornness, desired the *Ordinary*, to put it home to him at the publick Execution, Which was this present *Wednesday* the 17th of *December*, upon a Gibbet set up on purpose for him at the end of *Race Alley* just against the Sign of the *Three Kings* in *Fleetstreet*: Whether, about the Hour of 10 in the Morning he was brought in a Cart from *Newgate*.

Upon sight of the place of Execution, the Criminal continued his obstinate denial of the Fact, nor was he observed to change Countenance. The *Ordinary* Prayed with him twice, and he likewise very Affectionately for himself. In the first of Mr. *Ordinary*'s Prayers, he humbly entreated the Almighty, that he would so encline the Heart of the poor Condemned Prisoner, that before he went out of the World he might confess and own his Crime: Notwithstanding which, he still denied the same, laying his Salvation upon it that he was not Guilty, and begged of the *Ordinary* that he would Publish the same to the whole World: Tho he confessed he had often provoked God, and that he justly deserved this severe Judgment. No more could be got out of him, but an obstinate denial of the Fact, which he stood in till he was turn'd off the Ladder, about the hour of Eleven, and hung till it was full Twelve.

Dated the 17th. day of
December, 1684.

Samuel Smith, Ordinary